Get Up and Move
The fourth “H” of the 4-H pledge is Health. In order to focus on better health, 4-H has started the “Get Up and Move!” program. The goal of the program is to encourage physical activity to help create healthy individuals, families, and communities. The activities teach children that being active is not only fun, but can also help to maintain a healthy weight, create strong bones and muscles, and contribute to an overall better quality of life. Physical activity is also a good way to spend more time with friends and family. If you can help your children learn good exercise habits early then they are more likely to become active, healthy adults.

Benefits of Being Active
Physical activity and nutrition work together for better health. In addition to physical benefits, being active can be mentally, emotionally, and socially rewarding. Other benefits of physical activity can include:

- Improved self-esteem
- Increased fitness level
- Stronger, healthier bones, muscles and joints
- Enhanced flexibility and posture
- Increased ability to manage weight
- Decreased risk of chronic illness

In addition, the types of physical activity that your children are involved in should be varied. This includes activities that fall into the categories below.

(1) **Aerobic Activities**: speeds the heart rate and breathing and improves heart and lung fitness. Examples include brisk walking, jogging, and swimming.

(2) **Resistance, strength bearing, and weight bearing activities**: helps build and maintain bones and muscles by working them against gravity. Examples are working with resistance bands, lifting weights, and walking. Every day weight bearing activities also include lifting groceries or textbooks.

(3) **Balance and stretching activities**: enhances physical stability and flexibility, which reduces risk of injuries. Examples are gentle stretching, dancing, yoga, martial arts, and t’ai chi.
Understanding the Pyramid

Similar to MyPyramid, the Physical Activity Pyramid was created in order to help you and your children understand what being “active” means. A sample pyramid for children’s activities can be viewed at www.madison.k12.al.us. Below is a summary of the types of activities your children can be doing and how frequently they can be done. Most of the suggestions provided can be done in groups, such as with friends or family.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Frequency of Activity</th>
<th>Suggestions of Types of Activities</th>
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| Everyday (As often as possible): | • Play outside  
• Go for a walk  
• Walk the stairs  
• Help around the house or yard |
| 3-5 times a week (At least 20 minutes of aerobic exercise or recreational activity) | • Biking  
• Swimming  
• Running  
• Roller blading  
• Soccer  
• Volleyball  
• Basketball |
| 2-3 times a week (Leisure and playtime/strength and flexibility) | • Tumbling  
• Miniature golf  
• Marital arts  
• Dancing  
• Push-ups/pull ups |
| As little as possible | • Watching TV  
• Playing computer games  
• Sitting for more than 30 minutes at a time |

In order to help your children keep track of how much physical activity they are getting, they will receive monthly physical activity calendars. You may want to help your children record the types of physical activity that they do each day and the number of minutes spent on each activity. Keeping track of physical activity minutes can help your children to set activity goals and to see their progress. Your children can then tally their monthly physical activity minutes and bring their calendars to the October club meeting.

Try to use this month to start becoming more physically active with your children and family. A fun way to be more active is to use the time you spend with your children to engage in activities that require movement. Most importantly, start having fun with fitness!

Source: (www.mypyramid.gov, www.madison.k12.al.us)